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NEWSLETTER

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SPECIAL WAR ON POVERTY ISSUE

WAR ON POVERTY PROVIDES NEW RESOURCES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Local Rural Areas Development committees today were reported expanding or revising their development plans to make use of the new programs and new financing provided in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964.

Congress passed the Act last month, authorizing 11 new programs to begin the war on poverty. This new legislation is of particular importance to local RAD committees because one of the aims of the nationwide RAD movement is: "To make continuous and systematic efforts to eliminate the many and complex causes of rural poverty."

In signing the measure, President Johnson said it will "strike at poverty's roots" by providing the poor with education, training, and job opportunities.

"We will work with them through our communities all over the country to develop comprehensive community action programs -- with remedial education, with job training, with retraining, with health and employment counseling, with neighborhood improvement," the President said.

The new programs will be put into operation as soon as funds are made available. Congress was considering a \$947.5 million appropriation to finance the war on poverty for the first year as this Newsletter went to press.

Governors were given the authority to approve or reject proposed projects in their States. Twenty-three Governors moved quickly to help local communities and non-profit organizations make use of the new legislation by appointing individuals or agencies to help direct and coordinate anti-poverty activities within their States.

The Act does not spell out specifically what organizations and individuals are eligible for aid. That job is left to the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, which was created to direct the war on poverty.

The purpose of the Act is to "strengthen, supplement, and coordinate efforts" to eliminate poverty.

Community Action Program

A major new program in Title II of the Act provides for Community Action Programs.

Under this provision, projects proposed by a rural or urban community that will help the needy obtain jobs or improve their education and living conditions could qualify for Federal aid.

Indications are the initial projects will include pre-school centers, health clinics, community houses, playgrounds, and adult-education facilities.



The Federal government will put up 90 percent of the money for such projects during the first two years of the local Community Action Program, and 50 percent thereafter. The local share of the cost may be in services or cash.

The Act also provides funds for technical assistance. Local Community Action sponsors could hire professional help direct, or contract for technical assistance through a university.

More than 100 rural counties and 21 cities already are preparing Community Action plans.

One of the first rural areas to complete a preliminary draft of a Community Action Program was a seven-county area in northern New Mexico.

Revisions may be made before it is finally submitted, but the preliminary draft stresses:

1. Education -- Pre-school nurseries where children will learn social skills and language (many have Spanish-speaking parents), and remedial classes which will emphasize the three-R's -- reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic.

2. Recreation -- A summer youth camp to develop physical fitness (one county had 85 percent of its young men rejected for military service for physical reasons).

The preliminary draft also says there is a need for economic development, ranging from financing of small industries to development of better irrigation systems for small farmers, and it calls for new cooperatives to improve farm marketing operations.

Guidelines Issued

The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) has issued a paper which gives "some illustrations" of the kinds of projects that a local Community Action plan might include. These are:

1. Projects to develop new job opportunities.

2. Special and remedial education courses, emphasizing reading, writing and mathematics

3. Academic counseling and guidance services.
4. After-school, weekend, and summer tutoring and study centers.
5. Programs to benefit pre-school children.
6. Programs to reduce adult illiteracy.
7. Programs to educate migrant or transient families and to provide them with better housing and sanitation.

Other possible projects listed included improved living conditions for the elderly; health examinations and health education for school children; job training for the physically or mentally handicapped; building community child-care and youth-activity centers; special home management training; providing recreation and physical fitness facilities; helping rural families prepare for the problems of urban living, and providing health, rehabilitation, employment, educational, and related services to young men who are rejected for military service.

The paper adds that Community Action Programs will vary "as the needs of the people vary in different parts of the nation."

The paper emphasizes that existing programs, such as the Manpower Development and Training Act, the 1962 Public Welfare Amendments and vocational education and housing programs should be fused with the new technical and financial assistance programs for a coordinated attack on poverty.

This is the RAD approach.

"In smaller communities and in those with more limited resources, local leaders can begin a Community Action Program in stages," the paper states. "For example, a community might start with a pre-school program coupled with a health service clinic for these youngsters. These would be followed by other specific programs all linked to each other in a coordinated campaign."

An important point: The paper says apply to Community Action Programs, Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D.C., 20525, for the detailed forms to submit your application.

Other New Programs Authorized

The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 authorized a series of other programs to help stamp out poverty.

Briefly, these include:



- * A Job Corps where young men 16-to-21 years old would receive educational instruction as well as on-the-job training on conservation projects to help increase their job-getting ability.

- * Work Training programs to provide work and vocational training opportunities for young men and women who can successfully remain in their home communities, but who need such work or training in order to remain in school or to prepare for productive employment.

- * A Work Study program to provide part-time and summer jobs that will enable students from low-income families to finish college.
- * Loans of up to \$2,500 to help low-income farm families improve their farming operation, start a non-farm enterprise, or join cooperatives.
- * Loans of up to \$25,000 to help needy people start a small retail or service business.
- * A Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) volunteer organization to help State and local leaders carry out various anti-poverty activities.
- * Pilot projects to educate adult illiterates and to educate and give job training to needy people who are on public assistance rolls.
- * Loans to help rural people establish cooperatives.
- * Projects to provide housing, sanitation, education, and day care of children for migrants and other seasonally employed agricultural workers.



These programs can, of course, be fitted into an overall Community Action Program.

Job Corps Camps Announced

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman and Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall have announced they will open 22 Job Corps camps within 90 days to help 2,000 young men develop new job skills and self-confidence while doing needed conservation work.

Within one year, 150 camps will be in operation, providing training for 20,000 youths 16-to-21 years old, they said. The Forest Service will administer the Job Corps camps which the Department of Agriculture opens in the National Forests.

In addition to room, board, clothing, medical care and \$30 a month spending money, trainees will receive a "terminal" payment of up to \$50 a month for each month of satisfactory service on leaving the Job Corps. Half this "terminal" payment may be sent to a dependent, and the Government will match such allotments with another \$25 monthly.

The Office of Economic Opportunity estimates each 100-man camp will mean \$180,000 in new business for the nearby local community. Much of the camp supplies will be bought locally. In addition, the conservation work will improve the outdoor recreation facilities and range and woodland resources.

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